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WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon today announced that the city of Thibodaux and the Chitimacha Indian Tribe will receive grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The city of Thibodaux will receive a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) worth **\$213,202** and the Chitimacha Indian Tribe will receive an Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG) worth **\$112,354**.

"HUD grants have proven to be very beneficial to residents of southeast Louisiana in the past," Melancon said. "I believe it is important that low- and moderate-income families continue to receive decent housing and services, and these grants will help make that happen."

Liana Barker, director of the Thibodaux Department of Housing and Community Development, said in the past, the CDBG has provided money for street resurfacing, replacing water lines and sewer lines, fire hydrants and constructing sidewalks. This year, the annual grant will be used to provide drainage improvements to the north Thibodaux area as well as funding for the second year of the city's community policing program. Specifically, Barker said this year's CDBG will provide the resources for Thibodaux to assign a police officer to do community policing in a troubled neighborhood, building relationships with members of the community and helping them with what they feel are the main problems in the area.

"These are things that normally you wouldn't do with the day in and day out police work," Barker said. "This goes above and beyond. The police officer would set up meetings and help neighborhoods in providing neighborhood watch programs. He will go house to house and eventually get to know everyone on a personal basis."

Marilyn Burgess, Housing Director for the Chitimacha Tribe, said the tribe uses its annual IHBG to help their elders and handicapped with emergency repairs and services and also to provide insurance for the housing that they manage under the housing authority. They also use the money to build homes for low-income families who live on the reservation.

Burgess said 54 families on the Chitimacha reservation live in homes that have been financed by HUD grants. She said the tribe can build one house every two years from the IHBG.

"It helps our housing authority tremendously because we receive no tribal dollars," Burgess said. "We really couldn't survive without it."

The CDBG program provides annual grants to cities and counties to provide decent housing and living environment, as well as expanding economic opportunities, especially for low- and moderate-income communities. The grant is used for activities such as revitalizing neighborhoods, economic development and providing improved community facilities and services.

The IHBG program provides grants for affordable housing activities on Indian reservations and areas, including housing development, assistance to housing developed under the Indian Housing Program, housing services to eligible families and individuals, crime prevention and safety, and model activities that provide creative approaches to solving affordable housing problems.

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